

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed April 29, 2004 has been received and the Examiner's comments carefully reviewed. Claims 1-24 have been indicated to be allowed. Claims 25-28 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and § 103

In the Office Action, claims 25-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nieves et al. (US 4,949,376).

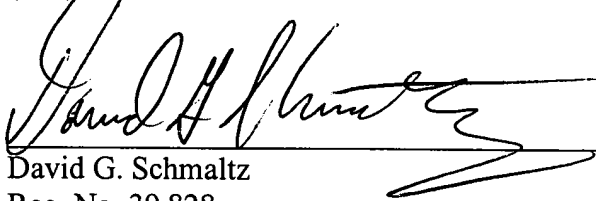
Claim 28 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nieves et al. (US 4,949,376) in view of Braga et al. (US 6,356,697).

As mentioned above, claims 25-28 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer rendering the §102 and §103 rejections moot with respect to those claims. Applicants are not conceding the correctness of the rejections for the features of claims 25-28.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300



David G. Schmaltz
Reg. No. 39,828
DGS/AS/jt

Date: July 29, 2004